



Chapter 8

Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

8.0 IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

8.1 THE RESERVATION

Generally, tactical maneuvers and live fire exercises in areas previously unused by any concentration of personnel and equipment will reduce vegetation cover, compact the soil and destroy wildlife habitat. These degradations to the landscape are considered permanent.

Removal of vegetation in establishing new roads and trails in previously unused areas will irreversibly affect the aesthetic quality of the environment. Large amounts of ambient dust will be generated and added to particulate concentrations in global atmospheric currents, representing an irreversible loss of desert soil.

No archaeological site is unimportant in terms of the goals of archaeology. Destruction or degradation of potentially significant archaeological areas represents an irreversible and irretrievable loss of cultural resources.

8.2 THE CANTONMENT AREA

The water requirements for Fort Irwin, should the National Training Center be sited there, will be about 606 million gallons (1,861 acre-feet) per year. Irwin and Bicycle Lake groundwater basins are presently used as a sole water source for the post. Water recharge into these basins is estimated at a total of about 266.7 million gallons (818 acre-feet) per year, or about 44 percent of the total required water needed to balance supply and demand. Consequently, extraction of water will exceed replenishment of the basins and water will be mined at an estimated rate of 339.3 million gallons (1,041 acre-feet) per year if water is extracted only from these basins.

8.3 THE BARSTOW AREA

The change of mission at Fort Irwin will mean the achievement of presently predicted 1990 population levels by 1984 in the Barstow area. Thus, the depletion of existing water supplies will be accelerated proportionately.